

Message Text

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73

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12

RSR-01 /080 W

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R 192025 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6394

INFO AMCONSUL AUCKLAND

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

UNCLAS WELLINGTON 658

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PGOV, NZ

SUBJECT: NEW ZEALAND PARLIAMENT BEGINS TWO MONTH BREAK

REF: WELLINGTON 371

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. NEW ZEALAND PARLIAMENT ADJOURNED MARCH 16 AFTER A SHORT FOUR WEEK SESSION AND IS NOT EXPECTED TO RESUME PROCEEDINGS UNTIL LATE MAY OR EARLY JUNE. LABOUR GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN SEVERELY CRITICIZED BY OPPOSITION FOR CALLING EARLY SESSION OF PARLIAMENT WHEN WORKLOAD WAS SO LIGHT. CURRENT RECESS IS MADE NECESSARY BY LACK OF DRAFT LEGISLATION. END SUMMARY.

2. NEW ZEALAND PARLIAMENT ENDED FIRST SESSION OF 1973 TERM MARCH 16, ONE MONTH AFTER IT OPENED, AND IS NOT EXPECTED TO RESUME ITS PROCEEDINGS UNTIL LATE MAY OR EARLY JUNE. EXACT DATE FOR RECONVENING WAS NOT GIVEN BY PRIME MINISTER KIRK. OPPOSITION USED OCCASION TO SEVERELY CRITICIZE LABOUR GOVERNMENT FOR ITS QUOTE INEPT HANDLING UNQUOTE OF FIRST SESSION AND FOR CALLING PARLIAMENT INTO SESSION WITHOUT FIRST MAKING CERTAIN THAT AN EARLY SESSION WAS REQUIRED. OPPOSITION USED ONE MONTH SESSION TO GOOD ADVANTAGE BY CONTINUING SHARP QUESTIONS WHICH UNDERSCORED CABINET MINISTERS'

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LACK OF KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR PORTFOLIOS.

3. RECESS WILL BE USED BY COMMITTEES TO REVIEW WHAT LIMITED LEGISLATION WAS INTRODUCED, AND BY LAW DRAFTING OFFICES TO COMPLETE DRAFTS OF LEGISLATION NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT REMAINDER OF LABOUR'S CAMPAIGN PROMISES. PRIME MINISTER KIRK HAS NOTED IN PRIVATE THAT THIS BREAK IS NEEDED BECAUSE DRAFTING OFFICE IS SHORT STAFFED AND UNABLE TO PRODUCE ALL THE LEGISLATION LABOUR HAD IN MIND FOR THIS SESSION. BREAK WILL ALSO GIVE HARD PRESSED CABINET MINISTERS AN OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME BETTER ACQUAINTED WITH THEIR PORTFOLIOS AND TO MAP OUT MORE CLEARLY LABOUR POLICIES ON A NUMBER OF ITEMS.

4. DESPITE KIRK'S STATEMENT EARLIER THIS YEAR THAT MINISTERS WOULD DO LITTLE TRAVELLING, AT LEAST FOUR WILL USE THE BREAK PERIOD FOR OVERSEAS TOURS. THIS INCLUDES DEFENSE MINISTER FAULKNER'S TRIP TO SEVERAL SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS, AGRICULTURAL MINISTER MOYLE'S VISIT TO THE US AND EUROPE, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER WATT'S VISIT TO EUROPE AND THE US, AND MINISTER OF OVERSEAS TRADE WALDING'S VISIT TO PRC, EUROPE AND THE US.
WOOD

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